

## A FLEXIBLE RESPONSE TO DEFENSIVE DEFENSE

by

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In recent years, Western literature contained a good deal about the shortcomings of *flexible response* — the official military doctrine of NATO. In the opinion of several authors, this doctrine is not suitable for exercising credible deterrence against the potential enemy. In fact, according to the doctrine, as it is known, in the event of an external attack, NATO would not immediately put into action its complete available nuclear arsenal, but would gradually react. In the event of an attack with conventional weapons, it would also defend itself with conventional weapons, but only as far as it is absolutely necessary in order to combat the attack. However, if it could not hold up the advance of the enemy in this way, at a certain point it would switch to the use of its nuclear arsenal. Initially, it would only use short-range nuclear artillery, but if that would prove to be insufficient, then it would launch medium-range or even intercontinental ballistic missiles — namely the complete nuclear capacity. According to the critics of flexible response this doctrine is unsuitable for credible deterrence, because the conventional forces of the Warsaw Treaty countries in Europe are in a superior position to NATO forces. They state that NATO would be unable to contain their attack with its own conventional forces, thus nuclear weapons would sooner or later be put to use. However, after launching the first tactical missile, the Soviet Union would obviously launch its own missiles, which would most probably be answered by NATO using its medium-range nuclear devices. In such a case, the operators of similar Soviet weapons would not remain idle, consequently an armed conflict between the conventional forces would extend with high grade automation into a general nuclear war. In such a conflict, the densely populated part of Western Europe, laden with industrial plants, would completely perish. Thus, the announced threat that at a given point NATO would use its nuclear weapons does not have a deterring effect, because practically NATO would be threatening with suicide. The attacker would be justified to reckon with cold rationalism that its attack launched with conventional forces would be successful, because it is in a superiority in the field of such weapons, and there is no realistic fear of a nuclear counter-strike. For example, Kissinger



says, "It is absurd to base the strategy of the West on the credibility of mutual suicide". According to him, the West Europeans "should not keep asking us to multiply strategic assurance that we could not possibly mean or if we do mean, we should not want to execute because if we execute, we risk the destruction of the civilisation."<sup>1</sup>

According to its critics, the flexible response can be considered as a controversial doctrine also from another point of view. After all, it starts out from the unuttered presumption that a *nuclear war can be limited to Europe*. This follows from the stipulation of the doctrine that in the case of unsuccessful defence with conventional arms, NATO would not immediately launch its available nuclear weapons, only to start with the short or medium-range nuclear missiles. Most probably this stipulation was formulated with the presumption that the enemy — after a few "minor" exchanges of nuclear strikes — will end its attacking operations. In other words, the elaborators of the doctrine regard it as imaginable that the conflict should not extend to other continents, and the area of the United States will not be reached by devastating nuclear attacks. It is interesting — the critics continue — that this presumption essentially tallies with the famous declaration of President *Reagan* in October 1981, according to which, the possibility of a limited nuclear war in Europe is not infeasible. Although after a general outcry, this declaration was refuted by official sources, the analysis of the doctrine's internal logic reveals that it was far from an accidental slip of the tongue.

Anders *Boserup* is correct when he says, "For deterrence to be credible, not rational political judgement, but insane vindictiveness or some untinking 'doomsday' device must be seen to be in control".<sup>2</sup>

At the time — certain experts pointed out — the deployment of Pershing-2 missiles was explained to the Europeans with the necessity that the alliance of Western Europe and the United States has to be demonstrated to the enemy, namely, that a nuclear attack against Western Europe would obviously result in the launching of American nuclear weapons, and in this way, a total nuclear war between the two global powers. The source of the obvious contradiction between the two theses — according to the West German *Lübkeimer* — should be sought in the difference of interests between the Americans and the European NATO partners: while the United States' interests would require to keep a possible conflict within European boundaries, Western Europe's interest would be to make it credible for the Warsaw Treaty that the United States would immediately enter such a war. Obviously the two aims cannot be accomplished simultaneously.

Within consolidated international relations — *Lübkeimer* continues — for example, in the period of *détente*, when nobody felt the direct threat of war, [Western] general public opinion accepted nuclear deterrence as a legitimate strategic aim. In fact in such a period, it was not the question what would happen if the idea of deterrence would fail in a concrete case. However — as he writes — when the conflict-solving diplomatic and political methods remain unsuccessful or not efficient enough, then military concepts concerning the avoidance of war, have a considerable greater



significance. When peace is less dependent on political conditions and more on the deterrance effect of nuclear weapons, not only the enemy, but sooner or later the members of the alliance will consider these weapons as dangerous. The more they have to rely on nuclear weapons to defend security, the smaller the credibility of the nuclear deterrence — he states.<sup>3</sup>

A further contradiction connected with the doctrine of flexible response concerns the *escalation dominance*. This means that in a military conflict only one party possesses the capability to cause an unacceptable damage to the other party with its new (and further) escalation steps, without the latter answering with comparable counter-measures. Practically, this capability is identical with military superiority. However, it is obvious that no escalation dominance exists in the relations of the two global major powers, in fact the United States does not possess such a superiority. However, the concept of the gradual application of more and more destructive weapons only seems to be a rational action if it may promise some result. If the aggressor has the capability of escalation in the same manner as the defender, then escalation does not mean credible deterrence on either side.

Do we have to take seriously the various quoted (and unquoted) critical statements? According to *Marek Thee* concerning the arms race, "as never before in the history, contemporary military doctrines and strategies are by their nature intuitive and highly speculative, because of the unremitant revolution in military technology and the impossibility of real-life-testing of the nuclear arsenal."<sup>4</sup> Well, if this is a speculative doctrine then its criticisms cannot be free of speculative features either. Thus, we do not know whether the flexible response is credible and whether the concerned critical statements are justified or not.

Of course, the question will be decided whether the actual addressee, the Warsaw Treaty considers this military doctrine as credible. Namely — at least in theory — the important thing would not be what the elaborators of the doctrine think about their own concept, but what the adversary thinks about it. However, this is not easy to ascertain. In a similar manner, not one word can be found in any NATO documents about which doctrine they would apply if in fact NATO would launch an attack against any country of the Warsaw Treaty and in the same manner no experts of the WTO have published lucubrations concerning a reverse case. Both alliances have declared a defensive doctrine and describes the other as the potential aggressor. However, being aware of this, one should not ignore the fact that in the WTO — at least as far as I know — no such document or analysis was composed, which in any manner would doubt the credibility of the doctrine of flexible response.

For example, according to *László Tolnay* in connection with the military doctrine of the WTO, "The socialist countries admit that a world war can be launched and for a time carried on with the use of conventional weapons, but the escalation of military activities can lead to a transition into a general nuclear war, whose main aims are the nuclear, but primarily the strategic nuclear weapons."<sup>5</sup> Other signs also indicate that nobody doubts in the WTO that in the case of a European conflict NATO would



sooner or later use its nuclear weapons. For example, in a contrary case the Soviet Union would not so strongly emphasize that NATO should also declare its no first use policy. This is also indicated by the often expounded Soviet standpoint according to which, no type of limited nuclear war can be imagined in the present state of the development of weapons. Soviet experts are deeply convinced that any sporadic nuclear exchange in Europe would almost immediately turn into an overall nuclear war. One does not know what type of information the American intelligence community provides for the military leadership, nevertheless, no data were revealed from this source which would indicate the Soviet or WTO doubts concerning flexible response, not even indirect references can be read concerning this.

*All this gives the particular impression as if the politicians and military experts of the NATO states would themselves undermine the credibility of their own military doctrine.* As if their aim would be to make the WTO leadership believe: if you attack us, we shall defend ourselves with conventional weapons, and do not be afraid that we shall also use nuclear weapons, because we are not so serious about the nuclear option.

An Eastern European observer is somewhat puzzled by the particular lack of NATO self-confidence (more precisely, by the lack of confidence concerning the credibility of its own deterrence). Particularly if he is somewhat familiar with the East European concept concerning the state of the European theatre, the geo-political situation of the WTO, the war, within this the nuclear war, and the possible solution of the conflicts between East and West. It seems simply impossible for the observer that the political leadership of the WTO — or of the Soviet Union — would be ready to undertake the astounding risk of initiating an armed conflict in Europe or to extend a conflict from another place to Europe and with this expose itself to the danger of a nuclear strike. When evaluating the undertaking of this risk, one should not ignore the fact that there is a dual risk: the attacking party has to presume that 1. with regard to conventional weapons it has not only a theoretical or marginal superiority, but an overwhelming, decisive superiority over the other party, and it can utilize its capabilities within a very short time, namely, it can *quite certainly* win a conventional war; 2. the attacked party does not dare to use nuclear weapons although it would still have time and a physical possibility for this, and is aware of the fact that in the case of defeat the attacker would destroy its entire political, economic and social system. It is an indisputable fact that the presumptions and perceptions are frequently faulty, and that a significant part of the wars — including exactly the two world wars — were launched on the basis of misperceptions. However, it is also a fact that part of such wars did not mean a deadly danger either for the attacked party or — which is more important in this case — for the attacker, as there were no nuclear weapons; in another part of the wars (for example, in the two world wars) it was only found much later that the perceptions are basically wrong and the short term analysis correctly sensed the existence of the military superiority.



Of course, the question can be raised the other way round: do they believe in the West that if an attack is launched against the member states of the WTO, the Soviet Union would also hesitate to use her nuclear weapons if the attack could not be halted with conventional means? Of course, because of the already mentioned reasons, such a question cannot appear in official documents and the official doctrine starts out from the apparent superiority of the WTO with regard to conventional weapons, but in the strategic plans such and similar questions also have to be answered somewhere. And what is the content of the answer? I do not know, but I believe that there is no doubt in the West in the prospect of using Soviet nuclear weapons in a situation when the existence of the socialist countries is put at risk.

Without going more deeply into the question of the European military balance, with regard to point 1. of the previous paragraph, I would like to indicate that in contrast to the numerous Western analyses published in the past decade, which illustrated a strong WTO superiority in the field of conventional forces, one can read an increasing number of studies containing different conclusions. According to Mary Kaldor: "There now exists a rough conventional balance in Europe that has actually moved in NATO's favor over the last ten years" — adding that — "NATO has a numerical superiority in some categories of military strength, such as the manpower, anti-tank weapons, and helicopters. . . The Warsaw Pact has a superiority in others, including tanks, artillery and anti-aircraft weapons."<sup>6</sup> John Mearsheimer says that, "NATO has strong conventional forces that stand a good chance of thwarting a Soviet blitzkrieg."<sup>7</sup> "Although official comparisons of NATO and Warsaw Pact defence spending — states Barry Posen — have consistently shown NATO outspending the Pact by varying degrees. . . the tendency in both official and unofficial balance assessments has been to highlight Pact advantages in tanks, guns, planes, or divisions. The possibility that NATO's higher spending might be generating less visible, but equally important, elements of military capability seldom receives much consideration. . . Since NATO outspends the Pact, but the Pact 'out-invests' NATO, it follows that NATO outspends the Pact in people, operations, training, maintenance, and the like." However, according to Posen, this is more important and after all NATO has the capability to prevent a breakthrough by the WTO.<sup>8</sup> Well, if this is seen in this way by Western analysts who otherwise are critical about the military policy of NATO in many respects, then there is very little probability that the analysts of the WTO should be overwhelmed by the proud feeling of a considerable superiority.

Nevertheless, the NATO leadership developed a certain anxiety concerning the credibility of European nuclear deterrence and from among the two possible alternatives of the solution of the problem — in my opinion — chose the less fortunate one. This alternative is the lowering of nuclear threshold and the increase of offensive war fighting capabilities. This appeared in the not officially, but practically closely linked doctrines termed Follow-On-Forces-Attack (FOFA) and AirLand Battle.



The other possible alternative would have been the raising of nuclear threshold and the increase of the defensive capabilities, under the keywords alternative security, defensive or non-provocative defence and so on. Regrettably the latter alternative, for the time being, is only supported by politicians in opposition, peace researchers and a few companies, interested in the production of defensive weapons.

The declaration of the FOFA and AirLand Battle doctrines cause anxiety not only in the East, but also in a wide circle in the West. The FOFA was formally adopted by the Defence Planning Committee of NATO in November 1984 thus being considered the official battle doctrine. Although according to several declarations the AirLand Battle published in August 1982 is only a doctrine valid for the US army, numerous evidence indicates that practically it would be applied in the European theatre.<sup>9</sup> As it is known the essence of the doctrines is that in the case of an assumed attack by the Warsaw Treaty it is not satisfactory to attempt to halt the offensive forces on the frontiers, because in such a case the West would have to fight its defensive war entirely on its own territory. Therefore, with various *conventional* armed forces — primarily with the use of non-nuclear shortrange missiles, precision-guided artillery weapons and unmanned aircraft — powerful strikes have to be made at the beginning of the conflict on the first echelons and then on the second, the third and so on. The aim is to cut the supply lines from the attacking echelons. For this end, they have to destroy airports, stores, railway lines, bridges, radar stations and communications equipment, etc., at a depth of 50 to 400 km on the enemy's territory. Then as quickly as possible they have to penetrate the enemy's territory. According to the official American source<sup>10</sup> "operations carried out on the basis of the AirLand Battle are quick, powerful and successfully utilize the shortcomings of the enemy. . . In a constantly changing situation, the attacking [NATO] forces keep the initiative in hand and destroy the unity of the enemy's defence. Applying the various supporting and reserve forces in a flexible manner, they continue the attack until they acquire victory. . . Independently of whether they initially attack or defend themselves, the American units have to capture the initiative at any point of the globe and have to use this in an aggressive manner. . . Penetration deeply into the enemy's territory is not an unimportant or secondary operational task, but part of a co-ordinating operational plan which cannot be neglected." Up to now, the cited source exclusively spoke about operations with conventional armed forces. However, the following lines contain more: "The use of nuclear and chemical weapons dramatically increases the possibility to suddenly change the field situation which the attacker will be able to successfully utilize." Or somewhere else: "By extending the battlefield and integrating conventional, nuclear, chemical and electronic means. . . the US Army can quickly begin offensive action to conclude the battle on its terms."<sup>11</sup> D.T. Plesch quotes General Starry. The former commander of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and originator of the AirLand Battle told a Congressional committee in 1984 that in a Central European battle "the delays that are attendant upon asking for



and receiving nuclear weapons release always create a situation in which if you wait for until they get into your territory to ask for the use of nuclear weapons, it is always too late. . . . Plesch is justifiably stating that "*the use of nuclear weapons in AirLand Battle is therefore substantially different from the orthodox view of flexible response. . . . AirLand Battle appears to envisage a deliberate lowering of the nuclear threshold at a time when public concern has centered on the need to raise it.*"<sup>12</sup> However, in my interpretation, the quoted doctrine not only lowers the nuclear threshold onto a lower level, but practically terminates it for in any type of European armed conflict it envisages the almost immediate use of weapons of mass destruction. This is a characteristic, dangerous concept as it considers nuclear weapons identical with conventional ones, except that they are somewhat more destructive. Essentially this is described by Dieter Senghaas as "*die konventionalisierung der nuklearen Strategie*".<sup>13</sup>

Those who elaborated on this doctrine believe that the third world war could be conducted in a similar way to the second, although this could still be survived by the people of the continent, while survival of the next would be impossible.

A closely connected further problem is that a missile with a conventional warhead in its appearance is not different from a missile with a nuclear warhead. Only frequent on-site verification could decide what type of warhead it is, however, obviously there is no opportunity of doing this. The situation is similar in the case of aircraft and artillery guns. Consequently, the military command of the Warsaw Treaty forces — in a tense international situation — would not be aware of whether the deep penetration stipulated in the AirLand Battle doctrine or in the FOFA will be executed with conventional or nuclear weapons. In such a case, the military command is obliged to prepare for the worse case, thus the danger of launching an undesirable nuclear war increases.

It should be noted that the AirLand Battle or the FOFA present a particular danger for the minor East European countries. A deep interdiction — as it was shown — would involve an approximate 50 to 400 km zone, namely it would involve roughly the territory of exactly these countries. Of course, if an armed conflict would immediately escalate into an overall nuclear war then it would be immaterial in which order the members of the WTO would be destroyed. But if, for some reason escalation would be halted, this could only happen after the deep interdiction, when, however, irreparable damage has already been caused in the East European theatre. In other words, the gravest destruction would occur exactly in the minor countries situated at the borders of the two Europes, not to speak about the possible loss of territory. In this respect Plesch again quotes General Starry: "The outcome of the battle, we hope is that . . . the enemy assault echelon has been defeated, we have regained the initiative and possibly some of his territory. . . . We must create operational depth and we must do so on the enemy's side of the battle area." And Plesch adds: "It seems therefore that attacks by ground forces into Eastern Europe do form part of US Army preparation for a war in Central Europe."<sup>14</sup> No wonder,



that the experts of the concerned countries judge the mentioned doctrines in a particularly negative manner.

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As I mentioned before, the materialization of the other alternative, the concept of *defensive defence* could eliminate the lack of nuclear self-assurance by NATO. This concept was elaborated by West German peace researchers a few years ago and since then it became known in a relatively broad circle — thus I can omit its representation (although I consider it practical to summarize its essence in the Annex).<sup>15</sup>

The West German peace researchers suggest the elaboration of a defensive system for NATO, which is very effective, would prevent an attack launched with any type of conventional forces and at the same time, would not incorporate any type of threats to the countries of the Warsaw Treaty. No front lines, such as the defence system of the Maginot Line would be erected, because they can easily be broken through in a "Blitzkrieg". Instead, four defensive zones would be created along the border dividing the two military alliances.

The supporters of defensive defence expect a favourable political effect from the accomplishment of this concept. In their opinion, primarily mutual understanding and trust would increase between the countries of the two military alliances, which would also enable the conclusion of a number of other arms limitation agreements. For example, an agreement could be reached at the Vienna MBFR negotiations, which have been carried out without any success for the past ten years; or at the Geneva negotiations, and the first use of nuclear weapons could be ruled out in a bilateral or multilateral agreement, the sale of arms to the Third World could be regulated and so on.

At the beginning peace researchers suggested that NATO should *unilaterally* introduce the system of defensive defence. They were not expecting similar measures on the part the WTO countries.<sup>16</sup> Now nobody talks about unilateral measures any more and that is correct: if the new system would be introduced some time, then *it will have to be introduced by the WTO countries as well*.

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What arguments can be mentioned pro and contra the concept? First, I list the arguments *in favour* of it.

1. *The rejection of the principle of offensive defence, the replacement of the aggressive doctrines known as the FOFA and the AirLand Battle by another less dangerous concept may undoubtedly contribute to the consolidation of European security and to increasing trust between the countries of the two military alliances.* If NATO would genuinely stop the development of its offensive forces in the West European — primarily West German — area, if it would withdraw and then would let its heavy armoured units become



outdated, if it would make itself physically unable to carry out any massive attacking military operations — this would obviously have a favourable effect on the relationship between the two Europes. Such a series of steps would be an important indication for the socialist countries, because it would be embodied not only in announcements of positive note, but also in material changes.

2. Further progress of offensive military technologies can lead to the development of such *further systems of weapons*, which can *destabilize* European power relations. If in the future, efforts in the NATO countries will be directed onto the development of the defensive and not on the offensive capabilities, this would obviously have a rather positive effect.

3. It could have a favourable effect on the policy of NATO as an organization, if discussions within the organization in the future years would not exclusively cover the ratio to which the military budget should be increased or how deep the interdiction should be into the area of the Warsaw Treaty countries in case of a military conflict. An interchange of ideas about the possibilities of defensive defence would provide the opportunity *to approach the strategic and tactical problems from a completely different angle*, and to re-evaluate a number of theses, which since the halting of détente were handled in NATO as indisputable truth. It could also have a positive effect on the atmosphere within the organization if the *West European member countries would repeatedly express their differing strategic interests from those of the United States*. Only such and similar ideas could make it clear to the military and political elite of the United States that geographical differences and dissimilarities in historic development may demand a different military doctrine (and foreign policy) in Europe. The debate about the concept of defensive defence, which recently emerges with the participation of peace researchers and strategic experts, indicates the strengthening conviction in Western Europe: the present leadership of the United States should re-evaluate its general foreign political and military concepts.

4. Another argument appears in the Western literature, namely, that the setting up of a highly effective defensive defence system would reassure all those who, for this or that reason, regard the present conventional defence system of NATO as *fragile* and believe that because of this the military leaders would make hasty decisions about launching nuclear weapons in an eventual crisis. As defensive defence would be practically impenetrable with conventional armed forces, the necessity of launching nuclear weapons would not even emerge. Thus, the function of the latter would be essentially narrower after building defensive defence: it would only serve the aim of deterring the enemy from a nuclear attack. Thus, the implementation of defensive defence could significantly contribute to the raising of the nuclear threshold and at the same time, to the increase in the chances of the survival of human existence.

*Reservations* with regard to the concept of defensive defence are the following:



1. For the time being, the realization of the concept is only slightly probable. Primarily, because the *present American administration* — which has retained power for another term — *carries out such a foreign and military policy, with which the idea of defensive defence is absolutely incompatible.* The administration, which despite the increasing disputes and controversial nature of the programme, consistently carries out the deployment of the Pershing-2s and cruise missiles, which introduces for its own use the explicitly offensive AirLand Battle doctrine and makes the European member countries of NATO accept the almost corresponding Rogers Plan, will regard this concept as being basically contrary to its strategic outlook and aims, and will accordingly act against it. Thus, the question emerges whether during the next years, the conviction can be nurtured in the present American leadership that the concept of defensive defence serves the interest not only of NATO, but also of the United States. It also remains open how the West European member countries will opine about the concept; for it is far from certain that they will all agree with the idea of transarmament. Of course, not even the elaborators of the idea of defensive defence reckon with a rapid reaching of general accord, this is why they wish to launch an active propaganda campaign for the cause in the coming years.

2. *In order to increase accord and trust between the countries of the two world systems, NATO has to do somewhat more than to make its defence impenetrable.* While acknowledging the positive sides of defensive defence, one should not forget about the peculiar circumstance that the perfection of defensive technology and the increase of defensive capabilities *ultimately strengthen the NATO alliance*, and within this, the United States. The present strategical balance between the two military alliances and their leading powers is not exclusively limited to Europe. A strategic balance is a global and complex phenomenon. Global in a sense that political and military changes in any area of the earth affect it, thus, the different regions cannot be observed in a separate and independent manner from each other. Complex in a sense that it creates a united system, in which both offensive and defensive weapons can be found, as well as offensive and defensive strategic, operational and tactical doctrines. The fact that one of the forces confronted in the European region is equipped with *conventional* defensive weapons, may even increase the offensive abilities in the case of other weapon systems and/or other regions. The real threat for the Warsaw Treaty countries in Europe most probably does not primarily lie in the conventional NATO forces, but in the short and medium-range nuclear weapons, the Pershings, the cruise missiles and other nuclear weapons stationed in the forward based system. The described concept — as it could be seen — only mentions them so far, that *after* the change to defensive defence most probably the arms limitation negotiations will continue. For the time being, even after setting up an invulnerable NATO defence, nuclear weapons would still exist in Western Europe (at best — as the result of independent decisions — the number of short-range missiles would be reduced to a considerable extent). To make defence invulnerable in the field



of conventional weapons, where the position of the Warsaw Treaty forces is relatively favourable, might increase the fighting capabilities of nuclear weapons of NATO. Thus, the transarmament in the conventional sphere would only have a positive effect if similar measures would be taken in the nuclear sphere.

3. In this connection, the psychology of decision-making deserves mentioning. I think Kissinger said somewhere that in strategy it is not the existence of real marginal superiority which is decisive, but the *awareness or perception of superiority*. For in the possession of marginal superiority, it is risky to enter armed conflicts, because such a superiority can bring little result and all rational strategists are aware of this. But if politicians simply perceive superiority, on this basis they can make irrational decisions, which even endanger the security of the decision-makers themselves.

In our case, building up an invulnerable defence might bring about such dangers; in a critical situation, an American administration may feel that — with a perfectly defendable Western Europe in the background — it has a free hand on other continents.

4. None of the descriptions of the concept I know contains more detailed hints at the *sea-based forces* around Europe. Defensive defence would be exclusively developed on the mainland of Europe, although for a long time now the submarines and aircraft carriers which patrol around the continent have been acquiring an increasing significance and would most probably play a role in an eventual European armed conflict.

5. Western literature also includes the reservation that the accomplishment of defensive defence may make war with conventional weapons possible or imaginable. Until now — they say — none of the parties could ponder on aggressive plans in Europe, because it was clear that any type of attack would provoke a nuclear counter-blow from the other side; in other words, nuclear parity prevented all types of armed conflict in Europe. Nevertheless, if the transarmament can be accomplished, then some military leaders may feel free to calculate the gains and losses of an attack with conventional forces, and may presume that capturing the initiative is a better tactic and that better commanding abilities, surprising manoeuvres and the political conviction of the troops, etc., can decide the result of the war in a favourable direction. One of the authors reminds readers that throughout history every attacking party — including those who lost — almost without fail launched wars, trusting such factors. However, for the time being, this reservation does not seem topical, because — even if an agreement can be brought about sometime regarding the mutual disarmament of the European nuclear forces — the strategic nuclear weapons will still exist on both sides, namely, the state of mutual nuclear deterrence will remain essentially unchanged.<sup>17</sup>

The details of how defensive defence can be accomplished are still being elaborated in the West European peace research centres. Hungarian military experts have just started to study this concept from the side of the military sciences. Therefore, it would be too early to draw final conclusions from the already known ideas and presumptions; obviously, such conclu-



sions can only be drawn after thorough examination. However, one thing seems to be certain: *it is a concept which places some issues in the military confrontation of the two alliance systems into a new light, and — compared to other recently published Western approaches — searches for an essentially more positive solution.* It deserves distinguished attention from the side of the WTO, and further careful study, even if its accomplishment faces obvious obstacles. It is also certain that the accomplishment of the idea of defensive defence alone would be far from sufficient to rekindle détente and to normalize relations between the East and West. Thus, a change to defensive defence can only be imagined *as part of a desired process of détente and not as its initiator.*

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Where would such a revived process of détente lead? Some political scientists outline a far sighted perspective. In their opinion, with the passage of time the loosening of the system of military blocs could be started; according to them the elimination of the bloc system is the result of a desirable process on the one hand, and on the other, it could be an important stage of a longer term historic process. There are some political writers, according to whom, the minor East and West European states could also be neutralized.

For example, Jochen Löser, a retired West German general, advocates a Central Europe in several of his writings in which the states could preserve their social-political system, but would become neutral in the military sense. Foreign troops would be withdrawn from these countries, and from that point onward these countries would look after their own defence, similarly to the way it is done in Switzerland, Austria or Yugoslavia. In his book, jointly written with Ulrike Schilling, Löser says: "Central Europe should not be 'neutralist' and 'Finlandized'. If the use of a term is at all necessary in order to define the objective, then it may better be 'Austrialism' in the sense of an actively followed neutral policy, relying on state sovereignty. If the G.D.R., Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia would step out from the alliance with the Soviet army — similarly to the F.R.G., from the integration with the NATO forces — the co-ordination and control mechanisms of the alliances could be maintained as long as the Central European community, to be set up, will come into a situation to undertake their tasks."<sup>18</sup>

Dieter Senghaas likes to use the expression "Finlandization" which by him means the 'unlimited internal autonomy' of the East European countries, in addition 'to the legally codified confirmation of the security requirements of the neighbouring major power, and the continuation of a circumspect foreign policy relying on this.' According to the West German peace researcher, "Finlandization" and the elimination of the blocs in Eastern Europe would contribute to the satisfaction of the Soviet security requirements, moreover, it would increase the security of the Soviet Union's western frontiers.<sup>19</sup>



Mary Kaldor does not like the expression "neutrality", because it "may, in fact, presuppose the continuation of the blocs". She prefers to use the term "non-alignment" which, however, would not mean: "between the blocs", but "beyond the blocs". "A policy of non-alignment — she writes — is not simply a policy of opting out. It is a policy positively aimed at overcoming East-West confrontation and hence, at phasing out the military blocs."<sup>20</sup>

However, in contrast to the earlier quoted and a number of other authors, whom I did not quote on this occasion, Kaldor sees the situation in a much more realistic manner. Although she criticised the blocs in many respects, and for example she considers a reason for the deterioration of détente "the need to exaggerate an external threat to maintain bloc cohesion", she writes the following with regard to the *other* alliance: if some countries would start to leave NATO "their departure could help to diminish the confrontation between East and West by increasing the political space between the blocs. But it could also have the opposite effect. If other NATO countries, particularly West Germany, were to increase their own armaments and play a more dominant role as a result, tension within and between the blocs could be greatly increased."<sup>21</sup>

I believe that similar dangers are also perceived on the Eastern side. It has to be seen clearly that although neutrality, non-alignment is considered a very positive term in East European political thinking, this is only in connection with the neutral and non-aligned countries. With regard to the East European countries, these terms were compromised in the past decades, particularly through the 1956 Hungarian events. We may remember that during the Hungarian upheaval, those who unambiguously strived for the liquidation of the socialist system, wrote neutrality as their aim onto their flag and demanded the withdrawal of the country from the WTO. From that time onward, neutrality and the withdrawal from the military alliance became the synonyms of anti-socialism and the aspiration for the total change of the social-political system. Consequently, if as a possible result of alternative security concepts elaborated in Western Europe, anybody points out the liquidation of the bloc system and the neutralization of the Central European countries or their turning into non-aligned states, they will be faced with certain and immediate complete refusal from the Eastern side. One might say that such a reaction is relying on incorrect premises and the purest and most innocent political intentions can also be emphasized — nevertheless, the social fact will not change and goodwill will have no credibility.

If I correctly interpret the aim of the Western European concepts concerning alternative security and within this, defensive defence, they were primarily invented to lessen the threat perceptions of the Eastern European countries. These conceptions should be advocated in the future in a manner that the threat perceptions should not increase. Mary Kaldor is correct in connection with the other alliance when she says that "if [the above mentioned] countries were to remain in NATO and to join with likeminded political forces in Western Europe and the United States to



reorientate NATO strategy toward a defensive conventional posture, these actions could well have a more profound influence in diminishing tensions in Europe and making possible the ultimate elimination of the blocs."<sup>22</sup> In other words, not the formal structures should be first changed, because the military alliances are not the reasons, but the consequences of the split in the world and of the basic contradictions of interests existing in countries with opposing social systems. Let us get closer to the diminishing of the number of contradictions, let us mutually reduce the threat perceptions of the other party, let us multiply the means of mutual confidence building, let us extend all-European cooperation and we have already made considerable progress in improving the quality of life in every country of the continent.

## ANNEX

### The four zones of defensive defense

1. "*Fire-belt*". Very effective sensors, and weapons representing an enormous concentration of fire power, including anti-tank missiles, "intelligent mines" and helicopter mines against low flying attacking targets would be deployed in a zone of 5 km depth. No troops would be stationed at all in this zone. The mentioned weapons would be completely automatic or remote controlled. Because of their great fire power and precision guidance, they would be able to wear down a significant part of the enemy's attacking forces.

2. "*Hook-zone*". In this 25–50 km zone, the attacking forces would be under enormous fire from well hidden guns and rocket launchers; a large number of guided anti-tank missiles would be launched, as well as autonomous manoeuvred mines, which are able to reconnoitre and hit the penetrating armoured vehicles, while high precision anti-aircraft missiles would be launched against the attacking fighter bombers. The difference compared to the previous zone is that soldiers would be stationed here, however, not more than 3–4 persons per square kilometre. They would always stay in the same area and would know every bush in the district. These small units would dig themselves in, not providing any target, at the same time they would be able to survey the area and control the arms they handle. Electronic sensors densely deployed in the first two zones would provide precise information on every move of the enemy, and the information received would be analyzed by high capacity computers. They would also use optical instruments to sense the approaching vehicles. However, the guns and the launching equipment of the missiles would be deployed further from the units to prevent the attacking tanks from discovering their entrenchments in the moment of launching. Reliable contact would be set up between the units, which would accurately operate even in the fiercest period of the attack. For this end, underground optical fibre cables would be laid, since radio communication could easily be disrupted by the enemy or by the exchange of fire. According to these presumptions, even a very concentrated attack of heavy armoured forces, with considerable fire power, would break down, after having gone through 10–15 km in such an environment, and would lose 25–30% of its forces.

3. "*Manoeuvre-zone*". Mobile armoured units would be stationed in this zone – of not precisely defined depth – which would be able to counter-attack the hostile forces, that in some way broke through the previous two zones. These units would in fact be an "internal rapid deployment force" that would be able to reach the endangered points in a short time and destroy the invaders. However, at the emergence of the political crisis preceding the armed confrontation, they would immediately leave their districts and would be located in a decentralized pattern in order not to become the targets of the short or medium-range missiles of the enemy.

4. "*Rear defence zone*". This would include the rest of the defending country's territory. Mobile defence units would be set up in this zone, which in the case of necessity could combat the air-land operations and prevent sabotage planned by the enemy. In addition, further



units would be stationed here, which could provide efficient logistic support to the troops fighting in the other zones or could provide supplies.

Offensive weapons and units would only be stationed in one of the four zones, namely, in the third one. They would primarily be necessary to drive out the invaders from the occupied territories. The artillery alone would hardly be suitable for this. It is important for the defending party to have an option for counter-offence if the situation requires it. According to one of the authors, these weapons still exist and there is no opportunity to abolish them from one day to the other. However, as the time passes, some of them become outdated and their replacement will not be absolutely necessary.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, *NATO: The Next Thirty Years. Survival*, vol. 31, 1979, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Anders Boserup, *Nuclear Disarmament: Non-Nuclear Defence*, in Mary Kaldor and Dan Smith, eds., *Disarming Europe* (London, Merlin Press, 1982), p. 188. Quoted by Mary Kaldor, *Beyond the Blocks: Defending Europe. The Political Way. World Policy*, vol. 1, No. 1, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Lübkeimer's announcement in Dieter Schuster-Ulrike C. Wasmuth, "Alternative Strategien": Eine Auswertung der öffentlichen Anhörung im Verteidigungsausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages. *S + F Vierteljahresschrift für Sicherheit und Frieden*. No. 3, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Marek Thee, *Military Technology, Military Strategy and the Arms Race: Their Interaction. PRIO-Report*, 2/1985, Oslo.

<sup>5</sup> László Tolnay, *A Varsói Szerződés katonai doktrínájának és hadászatiának néhány összefüggése. Külpolitika*, No. 3, 1985, p. 88–89.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Kaldor, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence in Europe. International Security*, Winter, 1984/85, vol. 9, No. 3, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Barry R. Posen, *Measuring the Conventional Balance. International Security*, Winter, 1984/85, vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 52, 61, 86–88.

<sup>9</sup> D. T. Plesch, *AirLand Battle and NATO's Military Posture. ADIU Report*, vol. 7, No. 2, March–April 1985, p. 8 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Field Manual 100–5 and 7–1, 7–2* (quoted by Horst Afheldt, *Defensive Verteidigung*. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983). The text is retranslated from German.

<sup>11</sup> *Field Manual 100–5*.

<sup>12</sup> Plesch, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Dieter Senghaas, *Noch einmal: Nachdenken über Nachrüstung. Leviathan*, 12. Jg., 1984, Heft 1, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Plesch, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> On the concept of defensive defense see Horst Afheldt, op. cit., Albrecht von Müller, *Confidence Building by Hardware Measures: The Idea of Benign Defence*. (Background paper, 34th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, Björkliden, July 1984), Hans-Peter Dürr, Horst Afheldt, Albrecht von Müller: *Stabilitätsorientierte Sicherheitspolitik. Eine integrierte Rahmenkonzeption für die Weiterentwicklung der Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik der Bundesrepublik*. (Starnberg: Max-Planck-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, 1984), Johan Galtung: *Es gibt Alternativen! Vier Wege zu Frieden und Sicherheit*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984; Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker: *Die Praxis der defensiven Verteidigung*. (Hannover, 1984), Jochen Löser: *Weder rot noch tot. Überleben ohne Atomkrieg – eine Sicherheitspolitische Alternative*. (Munich, Rowohlt, 1981), Studiengruppe *Alternative Sicherheitspolitik* (Hrsg.), *Strukturwandel der Verteidigung: Entwürfe für eine konsequente Defensive*. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984), Norbert Hannig, *Abwehr durch konventionelle Waffen: Das David-Goliath-Prinzip*. (Berlin: Berlin – Verlag, 1984).

<sup>16</sup> See Afheldt, op. cit., von Müller, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> See Schuster-Wasmuth, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Jochen Löser – Ulrike Schilling, *Neutralität für Mitteleuropa: Das Ende der Blöcke*. (München: Bertelsmann, 1984), pp. 170, 174.



<sup>19</sup> Dieter Senghaas, Die Zukunft der Sicherheit Europas. In *Ulrich Albrecht, etc. (publ.), Stationierung — und was dann?* (Berlin: Verlag Europäischer Perspektiven, 1983), pp. 158 — 159.

<sup>20</sup> Kaldor, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Kaldor, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

## FLEXIBLE RESPONSE К ДЕФЕНЗИВНОЙ ОБОРОНЕ

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## EIN FLEXIBLE RESPONSE ZU DEFENSIVER VERTEIDIGUNG

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1. Die westeuropäische Kritik des offiziellen militärischen Doktrins der NATO. 2. Die Konsequenzen der kritischen Äusserungen; das AirLand Battle und FOFA Konzept. 3. Das Wesen der defensiver Verteidigung. 4. Die Vorteilen und Nachteilen der defensiver Verteidigung.